MARVEL

7

LGY#172

DONNY CATES • RYAN STEGMAN • JP MAYER • ANDRES MOSSA

VENOM

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DISGRACED REPORTER **EDDIE BROCK** STUMBLED UPON AN AGGRESSIVE ALIEN ORGANISM, CALLED THE SYMBIOTE, DURING ONE OF THE LOWEST POINTS OF HIS LIFE. SHARING A SIMILAR NEED FOR JUSTICE IN THE FORM OF VENGANCE, THE SYMBIOTE BONDED WITH EDDIE AND THEIR UNION GRANTED HIM POWERS SIMILAR TO THOSE OF SPIDER-MAN, AS WELL AS A NUMBER OF OTHER UNIQUE ABILITIES. TOGETHER, THEY NOW FIGHT CRIME AS THE WICKED WEB-SLINGER CALLED

VENOM

CENTURIES AGO, A SYMBIOTIC DRAGON CREATED BY KNULL, GOD OF THE SYMBIOTES, TERRORIZED ANCIENT MAN BEFORE EVENTUALLY BEING CAPTURED BY S.H.I.E.L.D.

IN THE WAKE OF THE SPY ORGANIZATION'S COLLAPSE, THE CREATURE WAS REAWAKENED BENEATH THE STREETS OF NEW YORK AND LAUNCHED AN ALL-OUT ASSAULT ON THE CITY.

WITH FEW OPTIONS, VENOM WENT TOE-TO-TOE WITH THE CREATURE, EVENTUALLY TRAPPING IT IN AN OVERSIZED BLAST FURNACE AND BURNING IT INTO NOTHINGNESS.

BUT VICTORY CAME AT A STEEPER COST THAN EDDIE COULD HAVE ANTICIPATED, AND HIS EXTRATERRESTRIAL PARTNER'S VOICE HAS BEEN SUDDENLY SILENCED...

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"OVERSIGHT"

PART ONE

"No one will ever know what you did. I've seen to that.
"Nothing has changed.
"For most of the world, and for anyone who matters, you're still Spider-Man's bad laundry day.
"Just another poor man's monster who's outlived his own legend.
GOVERNMENT ANTI-SYMBIOTE TASK FORCE
"I can relate.
"And I can change that.

"I sent my extraction team to that warehouse to retrieve a *sample*.
"After all, it's not every day that we are in contact with a...well, *whatever* that was you fought.
"The mission was a success.
"Until...it wasn't. Of course.
"You see, Edward, you present a bit of a problem for me.
"When my team found you, they assumed you were dead.
"They asked me what was to be done with your body.
"But then..."

YEAH.
I DON'T DIE WELL.
I'LL TAKE MY ATTORNEY AND MY PHONE CALL NOW.
Where is the sample, Edward?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS. YOU SAID YOUR PEOPLE TOOK THE SAMPLE. I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT "SAMPLE" YOU'RE TALKING AB--
You aren't lying, are you? *Sigh* You really don't know.

@#$% YOU.
ATTORNEY.
PHONE CALL.
That is interesting.
How much do you remember *this time,* I wonder.
Do you know how you got here?
You are not in a situation where an attorney would be helpful to you, Edward.
When you exist in this room, you exist nowhere else.
I'm not trying to scare you.
HEH.
YOU THINK THIS IS MY FIRST TIME IN A BOX?
I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE.
I THOUGHT S.H.I.E.L.D. WAS DEAD.
Oh, it very much is.
But, you see...

...nature does so abhor a vacuum.
WHO ARE YOU?
My name is Reed Richards.
No, not that one.
You may call me *the Maker.*

WELL, ISN'T THAT FANTASTI--
Walk me through the last thing you remember before you--
I'M NOT DONE ASKING QUESTIONS.
WHY AM I HERE? WHAT THE HELL IS ALL OF THIS?
Why...
Edward, you fought and rode a dragon telepathically linked to an ***elder void god*** through the middle of Manhattan.
You then detonated a rather large amount of stolen ordnance inside of said dragon before burning it and yourself nearly to death.
Like it or not, you have gained the attention of some incredibly powerful... people.
I'm afraid your days of hiding from the light are over.
I DIDN'T RIDE IT.
THE DRAGON.
Pity.

To your specific questions, however, I need you here because you may be my only way to find the sample.
I KEEP TELLING YOU I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT.
Oh. I think you'll find that you do.
Pay attention.
I retrieved the sample. And then it was stolen from my lab.
The people I am working with are quite insistent that I return it. I believe you can help me find it.
I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'D TELL ME WHO THESE "PEOPLE" ARE, HUH?
I have recently begun to work with an organization that--well, not an organization really...
A gathering, perhaps. A group that answers to a... higher power than...well...
Let's leave it at that.
We are called Project Oversight.
For now.

Now. The sample. I need you to tell me where--
CAN YOU STOP SAYING THAT? A SAMPLE OF WHAT? I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS!
A sample of the gigantic dragon psychically linked to an imprisoned primordial god. You left a piece of it alive in the incinerator.
Do try to keep up, Edward.
NO. I KILLED IT. IT'S GONE. AND HOW THE HELL DO YOU KNOW ABOUT--
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT'S HAPPENING. I DON'T GET WHAT YOU'RE ASKING ME...
WHAT? WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU? WHEN WOULD I HAVE DONE THAT? I'VE BEEN IN YOUR CUSTODY THIS ENTIRE TIME!
Don't flatter yourself.
I believe you may have made contact with the person or persons who stole the sample from me.
Hmm. Interesting.
Is that what it's telling you?
That you nearly died there and then you woke up here?
Edward...

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"You killed four of my men that night.
RATATATA
"Not that it really amounts to much of a loss.
"But still, it was quite difficult tracking you down and bringing you in.
SHUNK
"Normally I wouldn't have bothered.
"But I need you alive.
"Luckily you aren't the stealthiest of hunters, really.
RAGHH!
"We're able to track your symbiote's waste product to--"

WAIT.
...MY SYMBIOTE'S WHAT?
The...green...liquid you excrete from your mouth?
It's how your symbiote excretes waste when it dissolves foreign matter that enters your body.
In this case, hundreds of rounds of bullets.
Edward. Did...you not know that?
...
NO. YEAH, OF COURSE I DID.
Of course you did.
As I was saying...

"Your cornered-animal instinct to survive, and your symbiote's natural camouflage systems, proved quite effective.
"You eluded us for...some time. Which, for me...is quite impressive.
"We chased you for three weeks, Edward.
"You disappeared off the face of the Earth.
"And in that time, someone or something broke into my lab and stole the sample we retrieved from the incinerator.
"And then...
"...we found you.

"You were across the country.
"In San Francisco...
"...on the front lawn of your father's house."

DAAAAD!
DAD, PLEASE! HELP!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
DAD... WHAT IS THAT? WHO IS THAT MAN?
HE'S NO ONE, SON.
GET INSIDE, DYLAN.
...WHAT? WHO IS...
...DYLAN?

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHY WOULD IT TAKE ME TO MY FATHER'S...
WHY WOULD I...
I'VE...I'VE BEEN HERE FOR THREE WEEKS?
Five.
Three on the run.
And then two more. In this room.
With me.
I DON'T... HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?
Your symbiote is shielding you from trauma. Instinctually erasing parts of your memories that it believes will hurt you.
It makes you wonder, doesn't it?
What else has it erased?

I... I DON'T KNOW.
You don't even notice, do you?
You've been saying "I."
Not "we."
WAIT... WHAT ARE YOU...
Edward, have you not realized what's missing from this? From all of this?
Don't you feel a little bit...
...lonely?
YOU...
YOU TOOK IT OFF ME? HOW...HOW DID...
GIVE IT BACK! I'LL KILL YOU!
KILL YOU! GIVE IT BACK! GIVE IT--
This. Again. Very well.

FLCK
I didn't remove it.
It's just... well...for lack of a better term...
...it's *dead.*
More or less.
The damage done to the symbiote during your fight with its god all but erased its tenuous connection to its hive.
As a result, I'm afraid its voice, its... personality... is *gone.*
As well as whatever powers you may have inherited from the god-host.

It remains attached to you. And I imagine it will still be quite obedient should you need it.
Perhaps in time it will be able to regain some semblance of a personality again.
But for right now...
...it's little else but a guard dog.
NO...
YOU... YOU HAVE TO HELP...
YOU HAVE TO FIX IT. PLEASE, I NEED--
There's nothing I can do.
The only way to regenerate the symbiote's original makeup would be to reconnect it and restore it from the central hive itself.
And the only person to have ever made contact and survived that experience was *Flash Thompson*.
But I'm afraid with Flash dead, there's little else that can be done.
Now, I have a few ideas as to how we can extract this information, but I'm afraid they are a bit invasive. But I am willing to--
WAIT...

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TO BE CONTINUED...

IN MEMORIAM

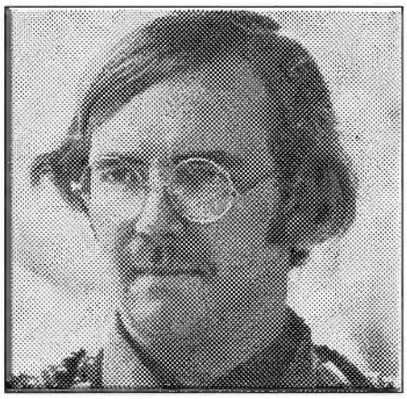
Gary Friedrich was best known as the co-creator of Ghost Rider, a demon-haunted, motorcycle-riding hero, and as a writer for a wide array of other Marvel characters. Some of his most notable stories, such as SGT. FURY AND HIS HOWLING COMMANDOS, addressed the horror of war and challenged popular norms of the time.

Gary found his greatest successes in stories exploring the supernatural. Along with writing Ghost Rider's first appearances, he also co-created the character Daimon Hellstrom, the Son of Satan. He would later masterfully adapt Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, bringing the horror icon into the Marvel Universe.

Former Marvel Editor-in-Chief Roy Thomas was Gary's best friend from an early age, even taking part in the same rock 'n' roll band. Later, Roy brought Gary into Marvel and helped get him his first assignments.

"We enjoyed being young and alive in New York in what we knew was a golden era under Stan Lee," Roy said. "Gary was a great guy and a good friend, and I'll never be able to fill the void he's left in my life. I'm glad he's at peace...and that he was blessed in his 30-year marriage to Jean."

Gary's legacy of powerful writing and innovative ideas will continue to inspire generations of Marvel fans and writers.



GARY FRIEDRICH

1943-2018

VENOM

#8

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